11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

there, so they copulated with her. After they quenched their desire for sex, Omauwā caused the girls vagina to be changed into a mouth with teeth.[10] Howashiriwā, another of the first beings, was sitting on the trail at this time, very hungry for sex. When Rahariyoma's daughter walked by, he seduced her, but in so doing, lost his penis: her vagina bit it off. It was when this happened that Omauwā's son became very thirsty. Both Omauwā and Yoawā began digging a hole to find water to quench the boy's thirst. They dug the hole so deep that when water did gush forth, it caused a large lake to form and covered he jungle. Then some of the first beings cut down trees, and floated on them to escape the flood. Because this was such a strange thing to do, they changed into foreigners and floated away. Their language also changed into the tongue of foreigners, and gradually became unintelligible to the Yąnomamö. This is why foreigners have canoes and cannot be understood.

Many of the first beings were drowned in this flood. Those who managed to escape and remain Yąnomamö did so by climbing mountains. They climbed Maiyo, Howashiwā, and Homahewā mountains to escape the flood, Maiyo being a peak near the area where Kąobawā's village had its origin. Then Rahariyoma, the mother of the girl whose vagina was changed into a mouth,[11] took a piece of red pigment and painted dots all over her own body. After she was completely covered with red dots, she plunged into the lake and caused it to recede. Omauwā then caused her to be changed into a *nahara*, a snake-like monster that lives in large rivers. After that, she caused Yąnomamö to drown when they tried to cross large rivers, either by eating them or by splashing large waves on them. Omauwā then went downstream and became an enemy to the Yąnomamö. Today he sends hiccups, sickness, and epidemics to the Yąnomamö.

It is because the foreigners refused to climb the mountains to escape the flood that they became enemies to the Yąnomamö. The foreigners tried to make friends with the Yąnomamö after the flood, but because their language was so different, the Yąnomamö refused to be friends. Today, however, the Yąnomamö are becoming friends with foreigners.

After the flood, there were very few original beings left. Periboriwā (Spirit of the Moon) was one of the few who remained. He had a habit of coming down to earth to eat the soul parts of children. On his first descent, he ate one child, placing his soul between two pieces of cassava bread and eating it. He returned a second time to eat another child, also with cassava bread. Finally, on his third trip, Uhudima and Suhirina, two brothers, became angry and decided to shoot him. Uhudima, the poorer shot of the two, began letting his arrows fly. He shot at Periboriwā many times as he ascended to *hada*, but missed. People say he was a very poor shot. Then Suhirina took one bamboo-tipped arrow (*nahaka*) and shot at Periboriwā when he was directly overhead, hitting him in the abdomen. The tip of the arrow barely penetrated Periboriwā's flesh, but the wound bled profusely. Blood spilled to earth in the vicinity of a village called Hõõ-teri, near the mountain called Maiyo. The blood changed into men as it hit the earth, causing a large population to be born. All of them were males; the blood of Periboriwā did not change into females. Most of the Yąnomamö who are alive today are descended from the

[10]In some variants of this myth she put *piranha* fish in her vagina. These fish bit off Howashiriwā's penis.

[11]There are many linguistic parallels between eating and copulating in the Yąnomamö language. The verb "to eat" also means "to copulate", the verb "to eat like a pig" also means "to copulate excessively", the adjective meaning "satiated, full" also means "to be pregnant." The context of the statement decides the meaning.

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

most common way for a child's soul to escape is to leave by way of the mouth when the child cries. Thus, mothers are quick to hush a bawling baby in order to prevent its soul from escaping. The child's soul can be recovered by sweeping the ground in the vicinity where it most probably escaped, calling for it while sweeping the area with a particular kind of branch. I once helped gather up the soul of a sick child in this fashion, luring it back into the sick baby. One of the contributions I made, in addition to helping with the calling and sweeping, was a dose of medicine for the child's diarrhea. A consequence of this set of attitudes about the vulnerability of children is that much of the village's activity with respect to shamanism and curing is directed toward the children.

RELATIVES BY BLOOD AND BY MARRIAGE Many forms of interpersonal behavior stem largely from the social roles implied in the kinship system. To be sure, some kinship behavior reflects the two distinctions of age and sex discussed above, for the terminology of kinship itself employs discriminations of this kind. For example, there are terms to distinguish older siblings from younger siblings and terms used by members of one sex only in reference to those of the opposite sex.

The relationship between kinship terms and biological parentage is not the same in the Yąnomamö language as it is in our own. As was shown in the first section of this chapter, people may stand in a child relationship to a number of individuals; that is, it is possible to have multiple "mothers" and "fathers" in Yąnomamö society. The term for mother and father conveys as much of a social as a biological relationship between individuals, and in the daily activities of the Yąnomamö it is the social implications of kinship roles that are most important.

What is implied in the kinship roles can best be seen in the way the kinship terms themselves are formed. All primary kinship terms take the ending "*-mou*" when used to describe the relationship between individuals. Thus, *asheya* means "my younger sibling," but *asheremou* means that individual X *behaves* toward individual Y *as a younger sibling*. This ending, *-mou*, also occurs in nonkinship usage to express "a way of behaving," "to execute a particular activity in a specified manner," or "to perform the activity that is implied by the word to which *-mou* is affixed." For example, *aki* means fresh-water crab and *akimou* means "to go hunting for crabs"; *howashi* means "a mischievous white monkey" and *howashimou* means "to act mischievously, to monkey around"; *nowa naka* means "enemy," and *nowa nakamou* means "to become an enemy by behaving objectionably"; *waiteri* means "fierce" and *waiterimou* means "to behave ferociously."

Whenever I would ask the Yąnomamö a question such as, "What do you call Kąobawä?" the answers would always be in the form of a kinship term to which "*-mou*" was affixed, but rarely in the form "I say such-and-such to him." Calling an individual by a specific term is, however, implied in the "way of behaving" toward that individual. But despite the fact that the Yąnomamö can say, literally, "I call him father" (*kama kä iba, haya ya kou*), they invariably say "*ya hätimou*"—"I behave toward him as a child."[30] Thus, they express their relationships to others in terms of *ways of behavior*. Each kinship category implies a set of these behavioral norms, and one's social life in the community is established with respect to all other individuals by the kinship terminology employed in each particular case.

[30] Although the word *hä* translates literally as "father," the expression *ya hätimou* can best be understood with the translation given above.